

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Cancelled)

2. (New) A leukocyte filter comprising:

a prefilter portion; and

a membrane filter portion downstream of the prefilter portion,

said prefilter portion being characterized in that it captures less than 60% of incoming leukocytes; and

said membrane filter portion being characterized in that it is non-cellulosic and generally homogeneous.

3. (New) A leukocyte filter according to claim 2 and wherein said membrane filter portion is characterized in that it has a pore surface area/membrane volume ratio larger than 6 square meters per milliliter of membrane volume.

4. (New) A leukocyte filter according to claim 2 and wherein said membrane filter portion comprises at least one layer of a generally homogeneous non-cellulosic membrane, wherein the total pore volume of pores having a diameter between 1 - 30 microns is less than 90% of the total pore volume.

5. (New) A leukocyte filter according to claim 2 and wherein said membrane filter portion is characterized in that it has a pore size distribution having a median pore size between 3 and 12 microns and having at least 40% of the pore volume being constituted by pores having a pore cross section diameter of between 3 and 10 microns and having at least

5% of the pore volume being constituted by pores having a pore cross section diameter larger than 10 microns.

6. (New) A leukocyte filter according to claim 2 and wherein said membrane filter portion is characterized in that no more than 30% of the pore volume is constituted by pores having a pore cross section diameter less than 3 microns.

7. (New) A leukocyte filter according to claim 2 and wherein said membrane filter portion is characterized in that it has a pore surface area/membrane mass ratio larger than 12 square meters per gram of membrane.

8. (New) A leukocyte filter according to claim 2 and wherein said membrane filter portion is characterized in that at least 40% of its pore volume is constituted by pores having a pore cross section diameter of between 3 and 10 microns.

9. (New) A leukocyte filter according to claim 2 and wherein said membrane filter portion is characterized in that at least 5% of the pore volume is constituted by pores having a pore cross section diameter larger than 10 microns.

10. (New) A leukocyte filtering method comprising:
supplying a blood product to be filtered of leukocytes to a prefilter which captures less than 60% of incoming leukocytes; and
supplying prefiltered blood product to a non-cellulosic and generally homogeneous membrane filter;

wherein said blood product to be filtered of leukocytes has had the content of at least one blood component removed or reduced, relative to the content of said at least one component in whole blood, prior to the step of supplying the blood product to be filtered of leukocytes to the prefilter.

11. (New) A leukocyte filtering method according to claim 10 and wherein said membrane filter is characterized in that it has a pore surface area/membrane volume ratio larger than 6 square meters per milliliter of membrane volume.

12. (New) A leukocyte filtering method according to claim 10 and wherein said membrane filter comprises at least one layer of a generally homogeneous non-cellulosic membrane, wherein the total pore volume of pores having a diameter between 1 - 30 microns is less than 90% of the total pore volume.

13. (New) A leukocyte filtering method according to claim 10 and wherein said membrane filter is characterized in that it has a pore size distribution having a median pore size between 3 and 12 microns and having at least 40% of the pore volume being constituted by pores having a pore cross section diameter of between 3 and 10 microns and having at least 5% of the pore volume being constituted by pores having a pore cross section diameter larger than 10 microns.

14. (New) A leukocyte filtering method according to claim 10 and wherein said membrane filter is characterized in that no more than 30% of the pore volume being constituted by pores having a pore cross section diameter less than 3 microns.

15. (New) A leukocyte filtering method according to claim 10 and wherein said membrane filter is characterized in that at least 40% of its pore volume is constituted by pores having a pore cross section diameter of between 3 and 10 microns.

16. (New) A leukocyte filtering method comprising:
supplying whole blood to a prefilter which captures less than 60% of incoming leukocytes; and
supplying prefiltered whole blood to a non-cellulosic and generally homogeneous membrane filter.

17. (New) A leukocyte filtering method according to claim 16 and wherein said membrane filter comprises at least one layer of a generally homogeneous non-cellulosic membrane, wherein the total pore volume of pores having a diameter between 1 - 30 microns is less than 90% of the total pore volume.

18. (New) A leukocyte filtering method according to claim 16 and wherein said membrane filter is characterized in that it has a pore size distribution having a median pore size between 3 and 12 microns and having at least 40% of the pore volume being constituted by pores having a pore cross section diameter of between 3 and 10 microns and having at least 5% of the pore volume being constituted by pores having a pore cross section diameter larger than 10 microns.

19. (New) A leukocyte filtering method according to claim 16 and wherein

said membrane filter is characterized in that it has a pore surface area/membrane volume ratio larger than 6 square meters per milliliter of membrane volume.

20. (New) A leukocyte filtering method according to claim 16 and wherein said membrane filter is characterized in that no more than 30% of the pore volume is constituted by pores having a pore cross section diameter less than 3 microns.

21. (New) A leukocyte filtering method according to claim 16 and wherein said membrane filter is characterized in that at least 5% of the pore volume is constituted by pores having a pore cross section diameter larger than 10 microns.